

Guide
To Taking The Written Test For

ENTRY-LEVEL
POLICE OFFICER
SERIES

including
Deputy Sheriff



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INTRODUCTION

The New York State Department of Civil Service has developed this Guide to familiarize you with the Entry-Level Police Officer Series written test. It provides a general description of the subject areas to be tested and the different types of questions you will likely see on the test. The Examination Announcement will specify the exact subject areas to be included on the test you will be taking.

The Entry-Level Police Officer Series written test has an overall time allowance of 4 ½ hours, plus 5 minutes to read and study the Memory Booklet. The test is divided into four separate subject areas and the questions are intended to evaluate the following abilities:

- 1. APPLYING WRITTEN INFORMATION (RULES, REGULATIONS, POLICIES, PROCEDURES, DIRECTIVES, ETC.) IN POLICE SITUATIONS:** These questions test how well you can apply written information in the form of rules to given situations similar to those typically experienced by police officers.
- 2. PREPARING WRITTEN MATERIAL IN A POLICE SETTING:** These questions test for the ability to prepare the types of reports that police officers write. You will be presented with a page of notes followed by several questions. Each question will consist of four restatements of the information given in the notes. From each set of four, you must choose the version that presents the information most clearly and accurately.
- 3. READING, UNDERSTANDING AND INTERPRETING WRITTEN INFORMATION:** These questions test for the ability to read, understand, and interpret the kinds of written information that police officers are required to read during their formal training period and on the job.
- 4. MEMORY FOR FACTS AND INFORMATION:** These questions test how well you can remember facts and information presented in written form after you have been given a period to read and study the information.

The remainder of this guide explains how you are tested in each of these subject areas. A **TEST TASK** is provided for each subject. This is an explanation of how a question is presented and how to correctly answer it. Be sure to read each one carefully.

You will also be given at least one **SAMPLE QUESTION** for each subject area. It will be of the type that you will see on the actual test. The **SOLUTION** and correct answer are provided after each question. You should study the question and its solution until you understand how it works.

SUBJECT AREA 1

APPLYING WRITTEN INFORMATION (RULES, REGULATIONS, POLICIES, PROCEDURES, DIRECTIVES, ETC.) IN POLICE SITUATIONS: These questions test the ability to apply written rules to given situations similar to those typically experienced by police officers.

TEST TASK: You are given a set of rules, regulations or other written information which you must read. You are then required to answer a question based upon your application of the rule to a situation.

SAMPLE QUESTION:

RULE: Patrol vehicles should be checked at the start of each shift. Do not assume that the vehicle is in satisfactory condition. Check all of the lighting equipment, all emergency equipment, siren, engine, oil, transmission fluid, battery, radiator and gasoline levels, tire pressure and condition (including spare), lug wrench, jack, windshield wipers and windshield washer fluid level. Check the body of the vehicle for damaged or missing parts and report any problems, damage or discrepancies to your supervisor. At the end of your shift, leave the vehicle in optimum condition for emergency use by the next officer.

SITUATION: Officer Burton is about to begin her patrol shift when she discovers that her police vehicle has a large dent in the left rear bumper. She knows that the vehicle did not have this dent yesterday, when she last drove it.

QUESTION: According to the Rule above, Officer Burton should most properly

- A. request that she be assigned a different vehicle
- B. begin her shift and be alert to any operating problems
- C. find out what other officers have used the vehicle since her last shift
- D. inform her supervisor about the dented bumper

The answer is D.

SOLUTION: *The situation states that Officer Burton has discovered a dent in the bumper of her patrol vehicle that did not exist when she last used it. The question asks what she should do about it. To answer the question, evaluate all of the choices.*

Choice A states that the officer should request a different vehicle. There is nothing in the rule that states that the officer should do this. Choice A is incorrect.

Choice B states that the officer should begin her shift and be alert to any operating problems. The rule states that the officer should report any problems with the vehicle to her supervisor. Choice B is incorrect.

Choice C states that the officer should find out what other officers have used the vehicle since her last shift. There is nothing in the rule that states that the officer should do this. Choice C is incorrect.

Choice D states that the officer should inform her supervisor about the damaged bumper. This is in conformance to the rule that states that the officer should report any damaged or missing parts to her supervisor. Choice D is therefore the correct answer.

SUBJECT AREA 2

PREPARING WRITTEN MATERIAL IN A POLICE SETTING: These questions test for the ability to prepare the types of reports that police officers write. You are presented with a page of notes followed by several questions. Each question will consist of four restatements of the information given in the notes. From each set of four, you must choose the version that presents the information most clearly and accurately.

TEST TASK: You must determine which one of the choices presents all the information from a particular portion of the notes and whether the phrasing and the punctuation of the sentence(s) results in a clear and accurate presentation of the information.

SAMPLE QUESTION: The following is a portion of the notes you took about an accident you were dispatched to.

NOTES: Responded to a call from 26 Arbor Ave. Residence of Tessa and John Wynter. Pulled in driveway. Saw woman on Wynters' porch. Identified herself as Mrs. Orvis, a neighbor.

QUESTION: Which one of the choices that follow expresses the facts presented in the notes?

- A. I responded to a call from 26 Arbor Avenue, the residence of Tessa and John Wynter. When I pulled into the driveway, I saw a woman on their porch. She identified herself as Mrs. Orvis, a neighbor.
- B. Responding to a call from 26 Arbor Avenue, the residence of Tessa and John Wynter, and pulling into the driveway, I saw a neighbor on their porch, who identified herself as Mrs. Orvis.
- C. When I responded to a call from 26 Arbor Avenue, the residence of Tessa and John Wynter, I saw pulling into their driveway a woman on their porch who identified herself as Mrs. Orvis, a neighbor.
- D. Responding to a call from 26 Arbor Avenue, I saw a woman on the porch of Tessa and John Wynter's residence. She identified herself as Mrs. Orvis, a neighbor.

The answer is A.

SOLUTION: *To answer this question, evaluate all the choices.*

Choice A: This is the only choice in which all the information is presented, and it is presented in the correct sequence. It says that the officer responded to a call from the Wynter residence, that he pulled into the driveway, saw a woman on the porch who told him her name and that she is a neighbor.

Choice B: "I saw a neighbor on their porch" suggests that the officer knew that it was a neighbor on the porch before Mrs. Orvis told him who she was. In the notes and in choice A, the woman tells him both her name and that she is a neighbor. This choice is incorrect.

Choice C: "I saw pulling into the driveway a woman on their porch" does not make sense, the woman could not be doing both. For C to be correctly written, there should be a period after Wynter, and the next sentence should begin: "Pulling into the driveway, I saw..." This choice is incorrect.

Choice D: The choice does not say that 26 Arbor Avenue is the Wynters' residence. It could be the address that the call came from. Also, another piece of information is missing; the officer does not say that he pulled into the driveway. In police writing every detail is important. This choice is incorrect.

SUBJECT AREA 3

READING, UNDERSTANDING AND INTERPRETING WRITTEN INFORMATION: These questions test for the ability to read, understand, and interpret the kinds of written information that police officers are required to read during their formal training period and on the job.

TEST TASK: You are provided with brief reading selections and asked questions relating to the selections. All the information required to answer the questions is provided in the selections; you are not required to have any specific knowledge of the content areas covered in the selections.

SAMPLE QUESTION:

“The increasing demands upon our highways from a growing population, and the development of forms of transportation not anticipated when the highways were first built have brought about congestion, confusion, and conflict, until the yearly toll of traffic accidents is now at an appalling level. If the death and disaster that traffic accidents bring throughout the year were concentrated into one calamity, we would shudder at the tremendous catastrophe. The loss is no less catastrophic because it is spread out over time and space.”

Which one of the following statements concerning the yearly toll of traffic accidents is supported by the above selection?

- A. It is increasing the demands for safer means of transportation.
- B. It has resulted in increased congestion, confusion, and conflict on our highways.
- C. It does not shock us as much as it should because the accidents do not all occur together.
- D. It has resulted mainly from the new forms of transportation.

The answer is C.

SOLUTION: *To answer this question, evaluate all the choices.*

Choice A: Nowhere in the passage does it say that there has been any demand for safer means of transportation. Someone who picks this choice may believe that there could be or should be a demand for safer transportation, but there is nothing in the passage to base it on. This choice is incorrect.

Choice B: The passage states that it is the congestion, confusion, and conflict which results in the high toll of traffic accidents and not the other way around. A person who picks this choice could either be confused as to which is the cause and which is the effect or not have read the choice carefully. This choice is incorrect.

Choice C: This choice is based on the last two sentences in the passage. The writer says “If ..., we would shudder.” (A shudder is a response to shock.) The implication is that we don’t, and we don’t because accidents do not all occur at the same time and place. The writer then points out that we should think of the yearly toll as being catastrophic (shocking) even though the accidents are spread out over time and space. This choice is the only correct choice.

Choice D: There are two reasons given in the paragraph for the high accident rate. One is the development of new forms of transportation; the other is the increased highway use from a growing population. Neither one is described as the main reason. It is clearly incorrect to say that the new forms of transportation are the main reason. This choice is incorrect.

SUBJECT AREA 4

MEMORY FOR FACTS AND INFORMATION: These questions test how well you can remember facts and information presented in written form after you have been given a period to read and study the information.

TEST TASK: You are first given a Memory Test Booklet containing a story. It will be considerably longer than the one presented here. You will have a limited period of time in which to study the details contained in the story. You will NOT be allowed to take notes while studying the story. At the end of the study period, the monitor will collect the test booklets containing the story and then hand out the test booklets containing the test questions. The first group of questions in this test booklet will ask you to recall the facts and information presented in the Memory Story.

MEMORY STORY: Officer Gary Hanson of the Burke Police Department was questioning Mathew Meyers, the owner of Meyers Sporting Goods, located at 321 Payne Avenue about a burglary that occurred the previous evening. Meyers said that when he arrived at the store at 8:50 A.M., he noticed that the rear door had been broken into. Meyers said that, after he had checked his inventory, he was missing 20 rifles, 16 pellet guns, 12 shotguns and 8 pistols.

SAMPLE QUESTION: How many shotguns did Meyers tell the Officer were missing from his store?

- A. 8
- B. 12
- C. 16
- D. 20

The answer is B.

SOLUTION: *The question asks how many shotguns did Meyers tell the Officer were missing from his store. The last sentence in the Memory Story states, "...Meyers said that ... he was missing 20 rifles, 16 pellet guns, 12 shotguns and 8 pistols." Choice A (8) is the number of missing pistols. Choice B (12) is the correct answer. Choice C (16) is the number of missing pellet guns. Choice D (20) is the number of missing rifles.*

CONCLUSION

Your feelings about tests have a great deal to do with how you perform on a test. Some people get so tense and nervous that they don't do as well as they could. They forget things they know or make simple mistakes. The following suggestions should help you overcome these problems.

- Study and review this Guide to become familiar with the test contents.
- Give yourself plenty of time to do what you need to do before the test starts. Arrive at the test room a little ahead of the starting time.
- Try to relax just before the test starts.
- Listen carefully to the instructions the Monitors give you. Carefully read all instructions on the Candidate Directions you are given at the test as well as information on the covers of the test booklets.
- Try to keep calm, cool and collected throughout the test.
- Keep track of time.